

Members of the Committee,

I implore you, please pass this bill. I'm a 24-year-old who has lived in Oregon all her life. I would love to stay in my state and improve it, give it my tax dollars and my hard work, but housing costs are becoming untenable with current wages. Although I have a college degree and was able to get a job in my chosen field, I could barely afford a shared 1-bedroom apartment in Portland. The city simply does not have enough housing, or enough housing of different types, to support the population that wants to live there. And that trend is copied within every small, medium and large city in the state. Bend is too expensive for all but the richest to afford. My hometown, Salem, is rapidly becoming a bedroom community for Portland despite a lack of public transit between the two—driving up both housing costs and traffic on I-5. Rural communities fair no better, as investors flood the region buying up farmable land for marijuana production at exorbitant prices.

Getting rid of single family zoning will not destroy these communities, it will revitalize them. Single family homes will remain in place in the majority of cases, but those close to urban centers may be replaced by denser triplexes, or be subdivided into smaller apartments that accommodate single-parent families, young couples trying to make a fresh start, and older neighbors living on fixed income who want to stay in their own neighborhoods but without the heavy cost of maintaining a 4-bedroom home. That kind of in-fill will not dramatically alter the fabric of a neighborhood—it will just make those neighborhoods accessible to people with a variety of incomes.

Importantly, removing restrictive single family zoning will allow multi-generational families to live together. Baby boomers can have separated apartments in their homes for their children to live in during a rough patch. Aging homeowners can rent out unneeded space to bolster their fixed incomes. And an aspiring homeowner like myself can build an ADU for rental income with the plan of moving my parents in once they grow older. None of these possibilities are financially available to middle class Oregonians anymore, but that can change. We can lower housing costs and create better, denser urban communities with this minor tweak in the zoning code.

When you vote on this legislation, please take young people like me into consideration, along with our grandparents and parents who are facing displacement due to rising housing costs. Please make Oregon affordable again.

All the best,

Kelly Kenoyer
Salem, Oregon